



The Leadership Landscape

March/April, 2007

A bi-monthly periodical published by the faculty of the [Federal Executive Institute](#) to help you continue your growth as a public sector leader.

Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.
Peter F. Drucker

Upcoming Programs and Courses at FEI:



[Coaching Skills for Federal Executives](#), April 30-May 2, 2007, Charlottesville, VA

[Understanding The 360-Degree Leader](#), May 3-5, 2007, Charlottesville, VA

[The Aspen Institute Leading Change in Government Seminar](#), May 21-25, 2007, Charlottesville, VA

[Executive Communication Skills: Leading the Process of Change](#), June 4-8, 2007, Charlottesville, VA

[Planning and Organizational Strategy for Public Sector Employees](#), June 18-19, 2007, Seattle, WA

[Creative Breakthroughs:](#)

Welcome from the Dean of Faculty: *In this Spring 2007 edition of the Leadership Landscape, the FEI faculty bring to your doorstep a new collection of valuable and provocative commentaries with a subtle theme of ethics and decision-making. Both are critical to values-based leaders generally, and public servants specifically. In the aftermath of a recent crisis of ethics in the private sector after some prominent organizational implosions, the time is ripe for our public sector organizations to define “best practices” in this area. Looking ahead, we would very much appreciate your input and suggestion for future themes and topics in the Leadership Landscape. Our contact info sits at the end of the periodical. Look forward to hearing from you and happy reading. For previous issues of the Leadership Landscape, please check out our [new archives](#) hosted by the [Federal Executive Institute Alumni Association](#). Happy reading.*
~Dr. Peter Ronayne, Dean of Faculty

Values-Based Leadership: FEI Faculty member, Dr. Gail Funke, discusses a simplified decision making process for high quality action, group commitment, and time minimization. Learn about the five decision making styles and give it a try! [Read more...](#)

Global Perspectives: FEI has instituted a third center under its roof: The Center for Global Leadership (CGL). Learn more about this new initiative, some pressing international issues facing public sector leaders, and upcoming CGL programs from its Director, Dr. Declan Murphy. [Read more...](#)

Policy in a Constitutional System: The U.S. Office on Government Ethics [announced](#) the Federal Executive Institute as one of the winners of the 2007 award for outstanding training programs in government ethics. FEI Faculty members, Michael W. Rawlings, discusses how public sector leaders might reframe ethical training for more than just legalistic rule

[Innovating in Government, June 19, 2007, Washington, DC](#)

[Power Thinking for Leaders, July 10-11, 2007, Charlottesville, VA](#)

[Leading Across Generations, July 16, 2007, Washington, DC](#)

[Leading Strategically: From Vision to Performance, July 17-19, 2007, Washington, DC](#)

[Emotional Competence: Working with Others for Results, July 19-20, 2007, Washington, DC](#)

[Leaders Growing Leaders, July 30-August 1, 2007, Charlottesville, VA](#)

[Building a Great Place for People to Work, August 1-3, 2007, Charlottesville, VA](#)

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following, but to inspire and challenge all members of their organization. [Read More...](#)

Transforming Organizations: Beverly R. Fletcher, FEI Faculty member, and Alfred L. Cooke, Director of FEI's Center for Organizational Performance discuss their own model for implementing an Action Research agenda to ensure continuous learning throughout your organizations. [Read more...](#)

Wellness and Balance Tip of the Month:

Everything in Moderation

I recently had a conversation with a group of FEI executives about the ever changing nature of **nutrition information**. One person had read something about the dangers of **artificial sweeteners**. In the meantime, I had read a new study about the dangers of sugar – linking an excess of sugar intake to pancreatic cancer – certainly to me, the scariest of all cancers. So we agreed to the old saw – **everything in moderation** – as a reasonable way to go about things.

There are plenty of exceptions though. **For example, when it comes to eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, I'd say immoderation is in order.** Studies only keep supporting the benefit of more and more of these food groups. Another thing I noted is how often studies cause us to go to extremes in one direction or another, but if looked at further, a realistic amount of the substance won't cause anything to happen whatsoever. An example on the negative side is the artificial sweetener, saccharin (sold as "Sweet'n Low"). The amount of saccharin that the rats had to ingest before they became prone to cancer was far more than a human being could normally consume. Another example is tea. The information has been widely spread that tea is a terrific antioxidant. But now it turns out, that the amount that had to be given to rats to kill tumors was again, far more than an average human could consume. Lesser amounts did nothing.

So there's no sense in banning saccharin or drinking lots of tea and expecting great results. My advice is – keep your eyes and ears open as the science continues to progress – but in the meantime – **moderation is a good mantra.**

~ Sumner Brown, Wellness Coordinator - *Leadership for a Democratic Society*, can be reached at sumner@healthyself.org

[Values-Based Leadership](#)

Decision Making Simplified

By Gail Funke, Ph.D., FEI Faculty

Simply put, decisions are actions we take – with consequences! It thus behooves us to use the best model possible when deciding. **This article can't make decisions for you, but it can help you use the right style**, saving you and those around you time and effort.

At FEI, many executives report that they use the group or mutual decision making style almost exclusively. Others indicate that they decide most things on their own to save time. Both can be either right or wrong for the situation.

While there are many ways to look at decision making (e.g., your MBTI preferences, your boss' style and expectations, whether you're trying to get ready to (finally) take annual leave), we will use the [work](#) of [Victor Vroom](#) and P.W. Yetton in this article. Vroom and Yetton use a very simple model and once you master it, it's easy to know which style fits best for each situation.

There are five styles, as shown in the box below:

Leadership Decision Making Styles	
L-1	You decide alone
L-2	You seek information, then decide alone
LF-1	You consult with subordinates individually, then decide alone
LF-2	You consult with your entire group, then decide alone
M	You share the question with your group and then you all mutually decide what to do

You select the style based on three criteria:

- ✓ The highest **quality** and best decision
- ✓ The needed **commitment** from those who have to live with it
- ✓ The style (after you satisfy quality and commitment) that requires the least amount of **time**

Let's see how this works: Assume I need to make a decision, e.g., about which quote to accept in securing food service. If I know my staff trusts me to decide (**commitment**), and I have the information I need (**quality**), then I decide alone (**L-1**). Time is saved, and my staff isn't bothered with something they trust me to do. However, if I need more information, I might look at some earlier reports on the vendor and then decide alone (**L-2**). If it develops that I don't have much data on this, but some of my staff do, then I may ask one or two of them for information and then decide alone (**L-3**). Or, it may be that the whole office was here when this vendor last provided service and it appears that the decision would benefit from having all the information out in the open. I consult with the whole group, then decide alone (**LF-3**). Remember, all these models assume the staff trusts me to make the right decision. If it turns out that food service is very salient to my group, or we've had a bad experience in the past, or I think it's in our best interest to decide together so there are no complaints later, I will use the (**M**) model: we will discuss, decide, and I will support the decision. The (**M**) model is time-consuming and should be used only when commitment will not occur in its absence. In many cases, your staff or your boss trust you and needlessly involving them will only create stress and increased workload.

You select your style based on which one will assure high quality, group commitment, and time minimization. Try it!

FEI offers many courses on decision making strategies. Please attend or recommend our [Power Thinking for Leaders](#) program that will be offered July 10-11th, 2007, in Charlottesville, VA

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Global Perspectives

Center for Global Leadership Opens at FEI

By Declan Murphy, Ph.D., FEI Faculty

Reflecting its deepening interest in the international leadership challenges confronting senior government executives, FEI has instituted a third center under its roof: **The Center for Global Leadership (CGL)**. I am honored to be chosen as its inaugural Director.

There are currently almost 90,000 non-military U.S. government employees at work overseas. A 2001 State Department working paper reported that 42 separate U.S. federal agencies are “performing a variety of functions in more than 160 countries that serve the national interest and help assure national security.” Clearly the competence these executives bring to their global roles will have a dramatic effect on the ability of the United States to accomplish its goals abroad.

Sadly, the research also revealed that among those executives involved in international work, almost 60 percent received no formal training for their assignments. More than two-thirds spoke only English and rated their proficiency for international work below 3 on a five-point scale.

To address these needs, the CGL has a mandate to pursue activities in three core areas:

- 1) Develop new executive education curricula designed to strengthen the global leadership competencies of federal executives;
- 2) Systematically diversify the student body of the LDS program by recruiting foreign participants with GS-15 or SES equivalent status; and,
- 3) Develop a capability to design and deliver custom programs for foreign governments both here and overseas.

FEI is excited to announce that the Center for Global Leadership will offer its first week-long program **“Leadership for a Global Society”** the week of September 16th-20th, 2007 at FEI in Charlottesville, VA. The course will address a combination of policy themes (e.g., The International Context for U.S. Global Leadership and The American National Identity) and provide experiential education based on adult learning models in such areas as Negotiating in International Contexts, Leading Multinational Teams, and Intercultural Awareness.

Faculty for this course will include Dr. Peter Ronayne, the FEI Dean of Faculty, Dr. Declan Murphy, CGL Director, Michael W. Rawlings, FEI Senior Faculty, Janet Bennett and William Lincoln, FEI Adjunct Faculty, and Philippe Sands, Professor of International Law at University College, London. Resource speakers will include Dick Spring, the former Irish Foreign Minister.

FEI is also a founding and fully participating member of the **Global Leadership Consortium**. The GLC consists of FEI, The National Academy of Public Administration, and The USDA Graduate School. It is a new research and learning network designed to support federal agencies in developing leaders who can excel in the global environment. If you wish to contribute your thoughts to future Global Leadership Consortium programming, please take a few minutes and complete this short survey: [Global Leadership Consortium Program Questionnaire](#).

FEI believes the development of sophisticated public sector leaders able to perform at outstanding levels in the international arena is *the* strategic human capital challenge facing the American government today. The CGL is a promising vehicle for addressing that challenge.

To learn more or register for FEI's "*Leadership for a Global Society*" course September 16th-20th, 2007 at FEI in Charlottesville, VA, please call Barbara Goldman 434/980-6383 or Bonnie Boston 434/980-6277

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Policy in a Constitutional System

Reframing Ethics to Inspire and Challenge

By Michael W. Rawlings, J.D., FEI Faculty

Recently, the U.S. Office on Government Ethics [announced](#) the Federal Executive Institute as one of the winners of the 2007 award for outstanding training programs in government ethics. We are extremely proud of this accomplishment.

Public service is a public trust. As written in the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, "Each employee has a responsibility to the United States Government and its citizens to place loyalty to the Constitution, laws and ethical principles above private gain. To ensure that every citizen can have complete confidence in the integrity of the Federal Government, each employee shall respect and adhere to the principles of ethical conduct set for in this section." [5 CFR 2635.101\(a\)](#)

This high standard requires careful consideration of both the reality and the perception of ethical behavior. Executives can rethink and reframe the ethics conversation in their organizations by asking:

- How can I inspire my staff/organization to better understand the spirit of ethical standards as well as the letter of the law?
- How can I improve, enhance and expand ethics training to inspire as well as inform?

Annual ethics training has often become a prescriptive and legalistic endeavor focusing on what Federal

employees are *not* permitted to do and *penalties* for violating ethical standards. While this information is essential and important, leaders can strengthen the ethical spine of their organizations by appealing to the core values of our colleagues. Leaders can simultaneously inspire and raise ethical awareness by relating to the public service calling of each Federal employee.

Margaret Dale and William Shea succinctly frame the difficult relationship between ethical considerations and core values. “Philosophers endlessly struggle to differentiate ethics from morals, beliefs, and standards. Personal ethics are centered on our answers to two questions: What is most important to me in life? And what will I do and what won’t I do to achieve it?” From “Containing the Firestorm – Ethical Decision-Making in the Midst of Controversy”, 2004.

FEI encourages executives attending the *Leadership for a Democratic Society* program to reflect on the following principles:

- Effective leaders must be values-based leaders;
- Government executives must create a climate that supports ethical behavior in their organizations;
- This means far more than following ethics rules and regulation; and,
- Ethical behavior in government must honor the spirit as well as the letter of the Constitution, be moral as well as legal, and must promote the public interest.

Here are some suggestions and practical steps for meeting these important ethical principles:

1. Anticipate ethical challenges in your organization by asking which ethics issues keep you awake at night – or which ethics issues have you seen derail other Federal executives. Tailor discussions and provide information and support that targets these issues.
2. Promote self-awareness and organizational awareness. Ethical strength is tied to values – of the individual as well as the team and organization. Highlight Constitutional values in ethics awareness and training.
3. Encourage discussion about the effects of ethical and unethical behavior not only on the individual but on the broader professional community. Frame issues in the hypothetical to avoid attribution and to obtain additional inputs and perspectives.
4. Inform employees of their responsibility to proactively seek information and ethical advice. [5 CFR 2635.107\(a\)](#). Create an environment that encourages transparency through questions and dialogue that does not *assume* knowledge of the spirit or letter of ethical standards. This may lessen fear of seeking input and risk-taking by employees who do not know or who are afraid to contribute.
5. Ensure that ethics resources are widely known and available. Some key resources include: “Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch” [[5 CFR 2635](#)]; your Agency’s Ethics Office; [United States Office of Government Ethics](#); [Ethics Resource Center](#)

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Transforming Organizations

Action Research

A Guide to Change and Continuous Learning in Organizations (The first article in a series)

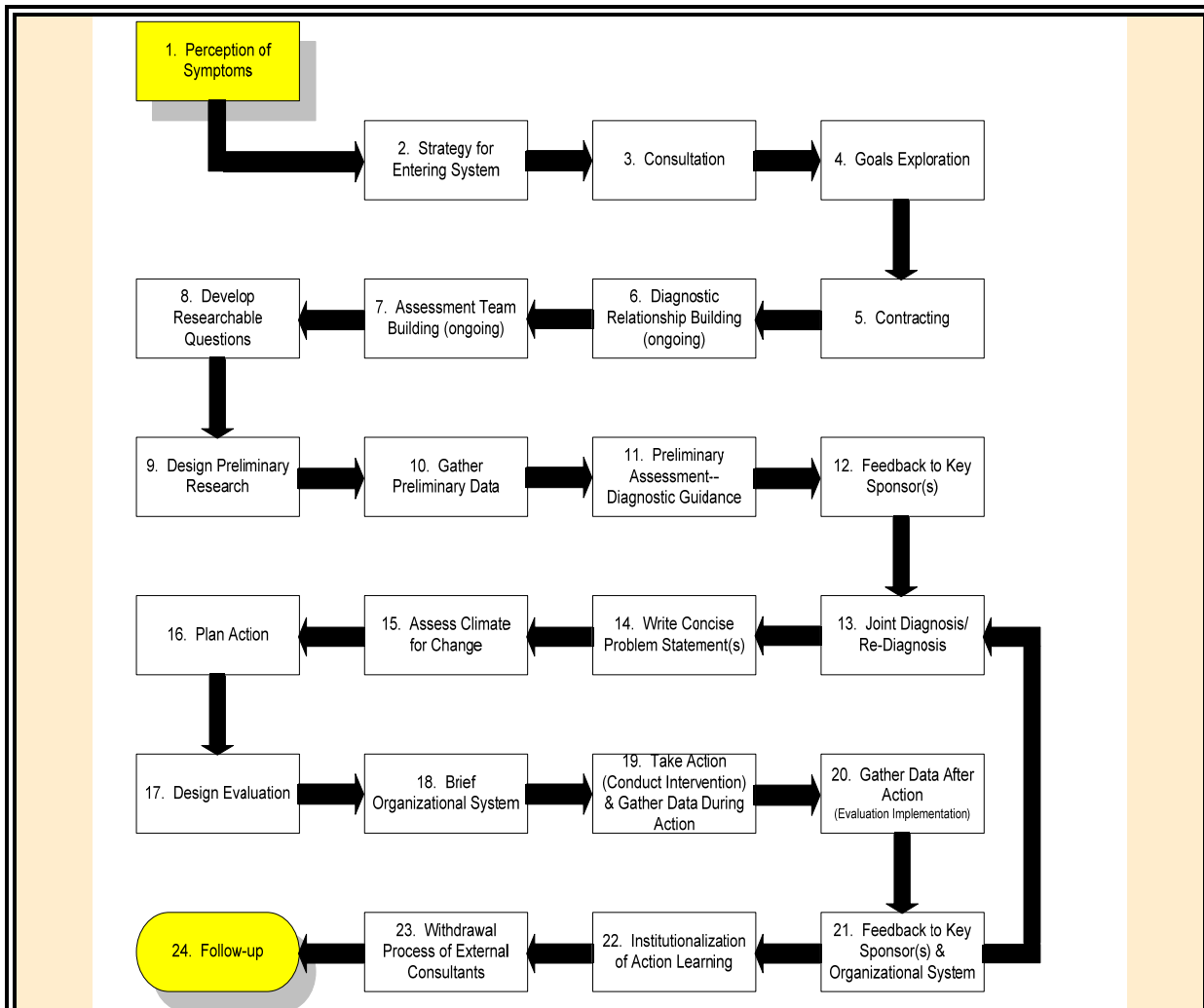
By Beverly R. Fletcher, Ed.D., FEI Faculty and Alfred L. Cooke, Ph.D., Director Center for Organizational Performance

Leaders often find themselves confronted with either an overwhelming amount of data or a lack of data by which to make important decisions. Their actions are often based on previous experience or a “gut” feeling about what should be done.

The action research model is a powerful tool that provides a practical approach to data gathering, data analysis, decision-making, taking action, and monitoring the results. Some fifty years ago [Kurt Lewin](#) (also known as “the father of organization development”) proposed that leadership actions could be much more effective and better informed by using a flexible research process that guides decision-making at each stage of an organizational change.

In working with leaders in a variety of fields and organizations who require a “user friendly” easier to follow model, we have designed a process that expands upon the Lewin model by clearly articulating the in-between steps of Lewin’s original model (see figure below).

The Expanded Action Research Model



As its name implies action research is focused on achieving both research and action. In its simplest form, action research can be defined as learning by doing with an emphasis on continuous organizational learning. Effectively conducting action research not only requires research skills, it calls for an understanding of a basic set of assumptions underlying the practice. These key assumptions are:

- No matter what technological, financial, or other problems that may occur, the essential problem is a human problem. That is, there will always be humans involved in the design and implementation of any process. Therefore, a thorough understanding of human processes and the ability to improve such processes are fundamental to action research.
- Although leaders have an understanding of the “presenting” symptoms manifested in their organizations, they may not know the core issues underlying those symptoms. They need help from people in the organization to diagnose, identify, and define the critical underlying problems.
- Outside consultants by themselves cannot, without exhaustive and time-consuming study or actual participation in the client organization, learn enough about the culture of the organization to suggest useful courses of action. Therefore, unless diagnoses and solutions are worked out *jointly* with members of the organization who have a good sense of what will and will not work in their culture, such remedies are likely to be either wrong or resisted because they come from an outsider.

Leaders can actively seek to increase the skills needed to successfully implement action research. Most organizations discover that many of the necessary skills already exist and are widely dispersed in the organization. The focus then becomes identifying, developing, and making the most of the people with those skills; and training in the areas needed. The key areas of knowledge and skill are: interpersonal

skills, qualitative and quantitative data collection skills, data analysis skills, knowledge of research ethics, and change management skills

It may be unreasonable to expect to find all of these skills and knowledge bases in one person—the leader, but certainly these skills can be found in teams of people working together.

Some Preliminary Things to Do

The action research model can be a very powerful change tool for the leader. Taking some time to work through initial preparation steps can be useful in understanding the action research model, or beginning a problem solving process whether or not the full action research process is undertaken. You might want to consider some of the following activities during the next few weeks in preparation for the first phases:

- Think about specific action research skills you might want to develop in your self and your team.
- Think about some of the issues in your organization that might be resolved by using action research.
- Document the activities that you undertake in preparation for the first steps of the model.

In article number two, we will begin a discussion of the model by working through the first five steps, beginning with *Perception of the Symptoms* and ending with *Contracting*. If you would like assistance with implementing the action research process in your agency, contact Dr. Alfred Cooke, Director of the Center for Organizational Performance at the Federal Executive Institute (Alfred.cooke@opm.gov or 434-980-6276).

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